

Order and Democracy: Trade-Offs between Social Control and Civil Liberties at Lake Parc Place

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Abstract

This article applies the classic theories of Thomas Hobbes and John Stuart Mill to the issue of maintaining order, using Chicago's Lake Parc Place public housing project as a case study. I find that public housing residents living in frightening circumstances may be willing to give up some liberties to gain stability and order, but that very order can in turn provide them with the civil space necessary for them to become active participants in their own governance. While Lake Parc Place residents willingly submitted to strict rules to secure a sense of safety, as Hobbes would suggest, once order was established they chose Mill's path, becoming involved in managing their own community. Thus, policies restricting liberties to increase safety have the potential to increase civic participation.

Keywords: Low-income housing; Crime; Urban environment

Introduction

Political philosophers have long struggled with the importance of the state's ability to keep order. It is largely agreed that a modicum of order and safety is crucial for the good life, but is it enough? Thomas Hobbes believed that order was all that citizens should demand from their government, and that they should be willing to cede all other rights to obtain it. The England of the 17th century, during which he wrote, had witnessed a notably chaotic period of violence and social upheaval, and Hobbes argued that gaining security was worth any cost in liberties (Hobbes 1651). By the 19th century, order had been achieved in England, and John Stuart Mill argued that while order is a prerequisite for progress and for organizing a normatively good society, it is no more than a prerequisite. He believed that good government not only provides security but also encourages people to play a role in governing. Such involvement, he claimed, would create the most equitable outcomes and bring out individuals' more noble characteristics (Mill 1861). In the interval between Hobbes and Mill, order moved from being the only thing demanded from leaders to a prerequisite for more participation in government by the general population.

In the current era, the problem of keeping order has plagued public housing administrators. Crime and fear of crime have dominated far too many public housing projects, particularly high-rise projects in Chicago (Popkin et al. 1996). In their study of three attempts to control violence at three public housing projects in Chicago, Popkin et al. (1996) found that, on average, 43 percent of the respondents in the public housing projects they studied had had a household member become a victim of crime in the past year, and 40 percent had had a bullet shot into their apartment.¹ While concerns about crime in public housing often haunt housing policy makers and administrators, the problem is of most concern to the residents of these developments. They often decry the lack of safety in their buildings, but what is to be done?

One answer was found at a mixed-income public housing project in Chicago, where the need for order resulted in a public policy in which residents initially accepted a Hobbesian trade-off of personal liberties for order. This is not a new idea. Nor is it an idea without critics concerned about fearful citizens exchanging important civil liberties for a modicum of personal safety. Lake Parc Place, however, provides evidence about the trade-offs affected parties consider acceptable and suggests that an initial trade-off does not necessarily mean a complete or enduring surrender of liberties. The example of Lake Parc Place suggests a condensation of history: that people living without enough order may accept a Hobbesian trade-off of liberty for security, but that once security is achieved they will, as Mill suggests, demand not only security but a say in their own governance. At Lake Parc Place, residents initially agreed to surrender many rights in order to achieve a measure of safety, but after safety was ensured, they sought ways to affect and improve their community through participation in a unitary democracy.

This article examines 20 in-depth interviews completed in 1993 in which a single interviewer asked a series of open-ended questions about residents' experiences at Lake Parc Place and before moving there. Roughly half of the interviews were conducted over the telephone; the rest were done in person or through the mail.² All respondents were women. Half of the interviewees were project residents—those who had lived in Lake Parc Place prior to the renovations—and the other half were nonproject residents who had

¹ Popkin et al. (1996) found substantial variation among projects: Fifty percent of Rockwell Gardens, 50 percent of Henry Horner Homes, and 28 percent of Harold Ickes respondents' household members had been victims of crime. Nonetheless, all levels were quite high.

² After a number of attempts were made to reach residents over the phone, in-person interviews were attempted, and if that failed, mailed surveys were used.

not formerly lived at Lake Parc Place and who were employed at the time they were admitted.

The “state of war” in Chicago public housing

Hobbes described a state of war as a condition under which no one feels safe either in their person or about their possessions, and his description aptly fits many public housing projects. Many have detailed the difficulty of the living conditions in the projects (Kotlowitz 1991; Rainwater 1970), describing them as places where residents fear for their lives and their property. Other studies have shown that a concentration of low-socioeconomic-status families in a neighborhood, such as exists in most public housing, is strongly associated with higher levels of violence (Short 1997; Skogan and Maxfield 1981), which Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls (1997) suggest results from lower levels of normative disapproval of deviant behavior.

The housing projects run by the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) are notorious for their high levels of violence; 1 of every 10 public housing residents is a victim of crime (Popkin et al. 1993). Of the 20 women interviewed at Lake Parc Place, 15 had lived in Chicago housing projects at some point, and 4 others had lived in similar low-income, high-crime areas of the city; three-quarters of these residents described feeling fearful in their previous homes, giving graphic descriptions of the dangers they encountered and the state of war in which they and their families lived. Most found gunfire the most frightening aspect of life in their old communities:

Where I was living over there, it was a lot of shooting. That’s what forced me from over where I was living at. Like at 10:00 p.m., you got to be in the bed, and you got to be laying down, can’t look out the window, you got to be laying down, and shooting so tough, where’s you can hear the bullets hitting upside the wall—bing, bing, bing! And you can be in the same room where bullets is hitting upside the wall! I was like, “Uh-uh, I can’t live here.”

For one, the gunfire resulted in a personal tragedy that brought her directly to Lake Parc Place:

My brother got killed. He was 18. My mother, she just wanted to get away because the gang warfare has been going on down there for about four or five years, you know. You know, it’s shooting constantly. They just constantly shooting. I mean, they just shoot in broad daylight and kids be outside playing. It’s just hard, ’cause being a kid you look, they can’t go out and play, be-

cause they parents afraid they gonna get shot or hit by a stray bullet, 'cause it's just horrible.

Also common was the feeling that nothing could be done to stop the violence. One woman told a horrifying story about seeing a woman raped in the hallway of her building and being too afraid for her own safety to intervene:

I helped her the next day and everything and I really apologized and said that I felt so horrible about everything and all. I helped her the next day a lot though. The thing is, I wanted to help her at the time, but I did not know if the guy had a gun or what he could have done to me if I tried to interfere. I had to worry about her, but also about me, you know what I'm saying. Like I could have had the same thing happen to me if I wasn't careful and stuff.

This woman was torn between trying to stop a horror inflicted on another person and concern for her own safety—fear that taking action would make her the next target of the man's violence. She felt she could not aid the other resident without endangering her own safety. Another described her inability to control even her own apartment and keep it and herself safe:

Over there it was, like, real bad. And by me staying on the first floor, it's like you could just walk—I didn't have no bars or anything, so you could just slide the window and walk right on in, make yourself welcome, that's how low to the ground. I was on the ground floor, and I didn't like it.

These residents came from situations of terrible violence in which they felt they had no control over their personal safety or their living space and possessions—a state very much like Hobbes's description of a war of all against all. These conditions prompted residents to give up personal rights for the assurance of greater safety when given the opportunity. Indeed, they had already been forced to surrender personal freedoms, such as the freedom to move around their own homes.

When offered the chance to move to Lake Parc Place, which they expected to be far safer, these residents opted to escape their old neighborhoods. They made the choice with clear knowledge of the scrutiny they would have to undergo and the rules under which they would have to live. They chose to submit to managerial authority at Lake Parc Place in order to escape the frightening state of war from which they had come.

Surrendering privacy through the screening process

Hobbes argued that to create a better life and protect themselves from a state of war, people needed to surrender their right to do as they please and submit to the will of any sovereign who could keep the peace. While no one demands that residents of Lake Parc Place surrender *all* of their rights, they must surrender some of their personal decision-making power and some privacy to receive the benefits of Lake Parc Place's relative safety.

Because residents are allowed to move in to Lake Parc Place only after rigorous and intrusive screening by the management, they surrender some privacy even before moving in. A board composed of residents also screens former residents wishing to return to Lake Parc Place. The board considers the household's reputation, including whether anyone in the family ever dealt drugs or caused trouble. While the resident screening board does not have explicit power to veto applications, management seriously considers the board's input. When the board expresses disapproval, management generally finds some other grounds for rejecting the application.

Although the screening process delves deeply into a resident's life, none of the Lake Parc Place residents interviewed had any complaints about the general process or any of its particulars. They repeatedly explained that the screening process was simply a cost they had to pay for greater safety:

It got to the point where I said to myself, "Look, go ahead. Say what you want to say . . . go ahead, screen me as much as you want to." . . . We mostly think alike, and realize what is important. The rules help us, they aren't hurting us.

[I] know that they screened the other residents, so I felt pretty secure about that. It [the security check] didn't bother me at all.

Rather than complain about their loss of privacy, residents focused on the fact that *they* did not risk the right to move in, because they met the screening criteria. They said things such as, "They weren't gonna find out anything 'cause I didn't have nothing for them to find out," and "I'm clean. It [the screening process] didn't bother me."

Surrendering privacy and autonomy through the rules

After they pass the screening, residents of Lake Parc Place must continue to abide by a set of rules governing their own and their children's behavior, rules that reduce their autonomy and further

limit their privacy. The rules are designed to promote a range of goals: maintaining the property, keeping children in check, and monitoring adult behavior, all with the broad goal of ensuring safety.

To enforce the rules, management has the authority to levy fines that average \$50—more than some tenants' monthly rent. Furthermore, management can evict a resident who has incurred more than three fines or anyone caught possessing a gun or dealing drugs. The threat of eviction weighs heaviest on those who cannot afford private housing, because anyone evicted from Lake Parc Place is prohibited from living in any other CHA development. Residents told us that a number of people had been evicted, and that perception made the threat quite credible.

In spite of the stringency of the rules, both a large survey (see Rosenbaum, Stroh, and Flynn 1996, 1998) and the interviews showed that the residents overwhelmingly supported the rules and their enforcement. One interviewee expressed her willingness to trade her right to privacy for greater safety in the buildings and suggested that anyone who would not be willing to make such a trade must be doing something illegal:

They have routine checks where they come into the apartment, you know, just to make sure nothing's going on, and it's kind of invading your privacy, but it's good, because it keeps out—if something illegal's going on, or if you have a family of 10 living there when they shouldn't be, and stuff like that, you know.

She agreed to the rules because she believed that they would help keep out illegal activities and other problems.

While many public and private apartment buildings require guests to sign in, at Lake Parc Place the building manager scrutinizes signatures for patterns that suggest drug dealing or guests staying in an apartment for more than 14 days. Thus, far from being a formality, sign-in sheets are used to monitor residents' guests. Residents were aware of this use of the sign-in sheets and generally did not oppose it. One resident described the process with great admiration:

And we really haven't had too much problem with drugs, somebody in here might be smoking marijuana, like that. But the reason I say that, because, I can tell you what she [the manager] does: On the sign-in sheet, she watches the pattern. 'Cause when people sign in, she takes it and put it in a computer. She watches the pattern of, see, of the traffic. If my son, if I got a son, and my son got a pattern, at a certain time, a bunch of young men constantly coming at a certain time, she watch that pattern. Now it don't say nothing's going on, but she will

notify me, say “Miss [Jones], you know, I’ve been watching, you got a pattern, young men constantly coming, and like that, I want to make you aware. I’m not saying there’s drugs going on in your apartment, but I want to make you aware.” That tells me, I’m gonna check my son.

She saw this monitoring as helpful, both to keep the building clear of drugs and to prevent trouble in her own family. Moreover, her comments demonstrated a sense of joint responsibility: If the manager senses a problem with one member of a family, she alerts the head of the household, expecting him or her to take care of it, and this resident appeared quite prepared to do so.

The sign-in sheet is also used to enforce the less popular 14-day rule. Some of the residents objected not to the scrutiny of their guests but rather to the limit on the amount of time a guest could stay with them. Although this was the most unpopular rule, the majority of residents, after some deliberation, still supported it:

If a person gonna—well, there used to be a conflict with that all the time, ’cause I feel whoever you have in your house is your business, ’cause I guess when you single—. But if they not on your lease, then they want to know if that person gonna be staying with you. That’s only right, I believe.

Some residents offered the familiar reasoning that such restrictions were the price they had to pay for safety, such as this one:

In the orientation I thought, “God, this is kind of personal,” you know. They have routine checks and all your visitors have to sign in and sign out and—

[Interviewer: “Did it make you pause before you moved in here?”]

Yeah, I kind of thought, “This is like living in dormitories or something, you know. We’re all adults here.” Seems like anyone should be able to come and visit, and they hate to have a time limit—you know, no one can stay over two weeks, ’cause that would be like living here. But I can appreciate it, because I don’t want things to get out, you know. I don’t want all hell to break loose here. I don’t want this to get kind of like the other project buildings, so I’ll let them come in if they want to. I don’t have anything to hide, you know. It’s a sacrifice, but, you know, having to sign all my friends in, I feel kind of juvenile, but, you know, I deal with it, because it keeps, ah, it may deter other things from going on.

Again, in spite of reservations, the resident expressed a willingness to make the sacrifices in personal rights to maintain safety. Another

said, “If you are willing to give [the safety of Lake Parc Place] up over some rules, then it was never important to you in the first place.”

Residents explicitly made the trade-off of privacy and autonomy for greater security, and overall they felt they had made the right choice because they believed that the rules helped ensure that Lake Parc Place would remain a safe place to live.

The payoff: A feeling of greater security

In spite of some implied reservations about living under the rules, 18 of the 20 respondents said that they were “satisfied” with their choice to live at Lake Parc Place, and all said that they felt safe in their new homes. The residents felt they had been adequately compensated for their partial surrender of autonomy. They repeatedly mentioned how pleased they were with the increased safety: “Here I’m not afraid.” “I don’t have to worry about anyone getting into my apartment.” “It’s beautiful over here. It’s a different place from where I came from.” More objective measures also suggest that Lake Parc Place had become safer. Chicago Police Department statistics indicate that the crime rate was much lower at Lake Parc Place than at other public housing in Chicago (Rosenbaum, Stroh, and Flynn 1998).

Several residents favored the sign-in procedure because it prevented unwanted guests from waiting at their doors:

Certain peoples, like that I don’t want to be bothered with, come knock on the door where I used to live at, and I didn’t have no other choice but to answer the door. But over here, all I have to do is ask the building, tell the security, no or yes, and then they can’t come up no farther than that front desk down there. So that’s a lot better too.

You know, I like the security, really—the fact that anyone come to see you, they have to be announced, you know, and if you don’t want them to come up, you can just say, “Well, I’m not well maintained.” And that part I like.

While residents were largely happy with the safety of Lake Parc Place and their trade-off of rights for safety, they did not submit to authority unequivocally. While Hobbes argued that individuals should give up *anything* an authority demands in return for peace, the Lake Parc Place residents do not agree. They were willing to cede certain rights and freedoms, but others did not seem so easily traded: “The rules are a little strict, but I understand that, too, by

being rehabbed, they want to keep them [the buildings] up, but strict ain't always better."

Residents questioned management's right to interfere with actions that did not affect others and took place only in the privacy of a resident's home. One resident discussed this in regard to management's decision to evict her neighbor, ostensibly for drug dealing but really for smoking marijuana: "There's not supposed to be no drugs in the building, but if you're in your apartment, and pay the rent, if you go in there and smoke you a joint, and don't nobody smell it, then what's the problem?"

For most others, any disagreement with the rules revolved around the limitations on guests. Five residents said that they did not like the 14-day limit on guests and felt that they should be able to decide who did or did not stay in their apartment and for how long:

There's only one rule that I'm not comfortable with and that's the 14-day policy. I understand it, but I think it restricts you a little too much as far as your own privacy. I do understand it, like I said, but because I have a little brother myself, and there are a lot of times he's out on the street and I prefer him to be here with me. But that's it. All of the other rules I agree with. I really do.

Another resented having her privacy invaded by management's scrutiny of the guest log: "I really don't quite understand why they keep a record of how many guests come in and out your apartment. It really shouldn't matter how many come in and out."

Another was disgruntled about not being able to have guests enter or leave the building without being under the watchful eye of security: "They were supposed to have, instead of them having security guards, there . . . we could buzz, let the person in, you know, you buzz and they were gonna have it like a television, where we could see who we let in."

By questioning the legitimacy of certain rules imposed by management, residents asserted their right to individual judgment. These objections suggest that even though they were willing to turn over many liberties in return for safety, they did not agree to a complete surrender of their right to determine which liberties were acceptable for management to claim. While these were only complaints to researchers, and even those who submit fully to authority might be expected to complain, other resident actions suggest that after gaining the safety offered by Lake Parc Place, residents wanted to assert some control over their environment. This pattern demonstrates a process more complex than a simple Hobbesian trade-off.

It demonstrates not only a willingness to trade only some (not all) liberties for order, but also a movement away from accepting the dictates of authority toward a demand for more democratic decision making after order is established, much as was suggested by John Stuart Mill.

Mill and the benefits of order

John Stuart Mill stressed the importance of order by arguing that it is a prerequisite for democracy, and that democracy is beneficial in its effects on its participants. He asked rhetorically, "If it is effectual to promote Order, that is, if it represses crime, and enables everyone to feel his person and property secure, can any state of things be more conducive to Progress?" (Mill 1861, 32).

While similar to Hobbes's emphasis on the importance of order, Mill's notion of order was merely a necessary stepping-stone to "progress": "Order would find a more suitable place among the conditions of Progress" (Mill 1861, 34). Among the many elements of Mill's definition of progress is a condition that encourages people to take an interest in the well-being of others and take part in the improvement of the community:

The release of the individual from the cares and anxieties of a state of imperfect protection sets his faculties free to be employed in any new effort for improving his own state and that of others, while the same cause, by attaching him to social existence, and making him no longer see present or prospective enemies in his fellow-creatures, fosters all those feelings of kindness and fellowship towards others, and interest in the general well-being of the community, which are such important parts of social improvement (Mill 1861, 34).

Mill argued that once order is achieved, individuals are free to consider and act on community interests. Once citizens have order, they can involve themselves in what social theorist Jurgen Habermas (1962) termed the "public sphere." Consistent with Mill's theory, after the residents found order at Lake Parc Place, they used the freedom created by their greater security to become more involved in looking after the community as a whole. Lake Parc Place residents were empowered to act to improve their community, whereas in two other public housing projects that underwent unsuccessful reforms intended to improve safety, the Henry Horner and Robert Taylor Homes, residents generally felt little such empowerment (Popkin et al. 1996). In contrast to concerns that individuals would lose too much by giving away some authority for greater safety, the evidence from Lake Parc Place suggests that once resi-

dents had gained security, their participation in their community actually increased. These findings suggest that the social order is key to increasing civic engagement in a way that builds social capital (Putnam 1993).

Regaining influence in the community

Seventeen of the Lake Parc Place residents interviewed sought to affect their community and influence decisions by acting as either “lobbyists,” who advocate certain policies; “bureaucrats,” who help implement decisions; or “reformers,” who promote an evolution in the power structure, including a more democratic decision-making process.

Lobbyists. Of the 20 women interviewed, 14 had taken on a lobbyist position by participating in the monthly resident meetings. These meetings are used “to let all your frustrations out [laughs]. Whatever they are! . . . They talk about management. . . . Talk about the tenant patrol, things like that. Just basically the future of Lake Parc Place.”

While residents have no direct power in meetings, they have a great deal of indirect influence, because management is responsive to their concerns and opinions. Residents attending meetings act as their own lobbyists, presenting and supporting their opinions on how to improve life at Lake Parc Place. All of the residents surveyed who attended meetings said that they spoke up when they had something to say and that meetings did not end until everyone had finished talking. Some issues provoked more debate than others; one that dominated these meetings was the management of community space, particularly the playground and the laundry room.

When nonresident children started using the Lake Parc Place playground and bullying the smaller children, residents met for three hours to discuss how to prevent the community’s children from being harassed. They had moved to Lake Parc Place for its safety and wanted their children to be able to continue to benefit from the safer environment. They decided, and management agreed, to create a tenant patrol to monitor the public spaces in the development and help keep order, especially among the children. The residents took action to ensure safety for their children.

Another well-attended meeting addressed a problem with vandalism in the laundry room. One resident described the discussion of possible remedies:

So, like the laundry room incident. The laundry used to be open 24 hours. I mean people like me, they like to wash at three in the morning. Like working people, they come in at three or four o'clock in the morning and they want to wash their clothes while ain't nobody down there. But people started breaking the machines; management wanted to close, you know, so it was a big discrepancy about what time to close. Some people were saying, "Keep it open—open it early in the morning." Some people were saying, "You know, 'cause we got to go to work, we need it late at night, three o'clock in the morning." Other people were saying, "Well, we here all day, and we got to wait till our kids go to school." So what she [the manager] did was, she say, "You can open it at seven o'clock in the morning, and it'll close at eleven o'clock at night." So that give everybody a chance to wash.

While many still favored 24-hour access, they accepted the compromise. Furthermore, residents used the problem of vandalism to address more minor annoyances—mundane issues arose in the discussion, such as not having change for the machines and finding laundry left in the machines. The residents decided that they could further reduce vandalism, as well as take care of these other annoyances, by assigning a volunteer to sit in the laundry room during the day, who called tenants when the wash was finished and provided quarters when needed. While the main issue was security, tenants also used the meeting to improve community facilities.

Overall, residents have been pleased that they could use this venue to discuss issues relevant to managing Lake Parc Place; they have liked having a say in managing their surroundings:

I go to them [resident meetings] regularly. If we have one where we need to talk or to address something that looks like it is getting out of hand, then we all go and sit together and discuss it. There are generally people there from both sides, and we sit and try to state our opinions of things.

I got a right to voice my opinion. If I don't like something they trying to put into effect that's gonna affect me and my kids, I feel I should have a right to speak about it. So I always speak at the tenant meetings, always.

Residents also believed that they ought to be consulted before any major rules were put into place. One resident was quite disgruntled about the fact that management had not consulted the residents before implementing the new identification card rule, under which

residents were required to obtain identification cards and show them to gain entry to the buildings.³

I mean as far as the IDs, you know, it's like, "Well, you have to take the ID picture." And then after you take the ID picture, you know, *that's* when she called the meeting about the ID picture. . . . I think she should hold the meeting with the residents, before she makes a decision.

Finally, while the resident meetings were the most visible way to take part in discussions of community issues, a few interviewees also took part in smaller, more focused deliberative bodies, including the screening board, which helps decide who will be allowed to live in Lake Parc Place.

Bureaucrats. While residents made efforts to participate in community concerns by taking part in deliberative bodies, they also sought to participate in the day-to-day implementation of policy, essentially taking on the functions of an informal bureaucracy. One resident described this as a way of having some control over activities in the building, to avoid having a "dictatorship":

We have tenant patrol here. We have Boy Scouts. We have 4-H. And we're proud of it. But none of these things will be effective without the residents, and it must be resident involvement in public housing. It's no more a dictatorship type thing. You know, "This is what you do, how you do it, and when you do it."

Given that many of the residents had moved to Lake Parc Place in search of greater safety, it is not surprising that the two most frequent ways the residents we interviewed chose to get involved was by taking part in efforts to maintain security. Three of the interviewees worked as security guards, and other residents played an informal role in keeping Lake Parc Place safe. We were told that becoming part of the security system, both formally and informally, was common.

By acting as security guards, residents played a direct role in ensuring that only they and their guests entered the building, cooperating with management to see that rules were followed and the community was kept safe. These efforts by both security guards and residents helped shut down a nearby drug-selling operation.

One resident described a potentially threatening situation of throwing out people who no longer had business in the building:

³ Management may in fact have consulted residents. Another resident claimed to have suggested the idea. Either the first resident missed the meeting in which identification cards were discussed, or the second resident brought the idea to management outside of the meetings.

Last year when I was doing security during the lunch program, the guys wanted to come in, and once they come out of the social room, they want to roam the building. No, you cannot do that. You eat, and you leave. That's it. You come in, you get in line, you get in there and eat, and then you leave. That's the way it is. They didn't want to do it, so a few times I had to call my supervisor, and then other times I just took it upon myself to tell them, "Look, don't play with me, just get the hell out."

When the interviewer asked, "Did you feel comfortable doing that? Did you ever feel fear, afraid?" she responded, "No, I never felt fear. I liked it. Especially the graveyard shift. Twelve to eight in the morning. Midnight to eight in the morning, that was my favorite shift."

Not only was the respondent not afraid to exert authority over the group of men, but she felt so secure that she preferred the graveyard shift. A cycle of security had emerged.

Three other residents are part of the tenant patrol, which monitors the building, deals with low-level infractions, and helps watch out for the children.

Some of us sit in the playground with the children, so they can play, make sure they don't fight or hurt each other, fall off the sliding boards, you know, and all that. We try and control anything they [the children] might try to do. You know, because children in this neighborhood, they bad as hell. They bad-ass motherf**kers, and they will try to come in that playground, and try to chastise them kids, and knock 'em around, and if they got any money they will try to take it. They'll do anything. That's what the tenant patrol's for, to make it safe.

These residents not only watch their own children, they help make sure everyone's children are safe. Again, there is an apparent sense of joint purpose and responsibility for keeping the area safe.

Reformers. While some residents try to look after community affairs by working within the current system as de facto lobbyists or bureaucrats, three of the interviewees have been involved in reforming the system of governance by instituting resident management, an effort that many residents endorse. The president of the board for resident management estimated that 75 percent of the residents support the concept. One woman described resident management as a more democratic, and therefore desirable, method of running the building:

I like resident management. I do. Because they give us more—see, we have say-so now, we can tell the manager and she'll, you know, take it upon herself, but when you have resident manage-

ment, it's like a vote. No one person gets to decide. See, with management, she decides, like the laundry room: "Well, to compromise both sides, I'm gonna open it this time and close this time." But with resident management, we take a vote. So if we was to vote that the laundry room stay open 24 hours still, and just have a monitor, then that's the way it would have went. No one person gets to decide. [With] resident management, residents manage the building.

Another spoke even more directly of gaining control: "I don't think of it [private management] being any better than housing management. . . . No, I think that compared to resident management, you know what I'm saying, it's still someone else managing our lives and our destiny."

Unwilling to submit fully to the managerial authority in return for safety, these residents seek to achieve a more representative form of community decision making.

Lessons for other public housing projects

The recent wave of reforms in Chicago's public housing suggests that policy makers may have reached a point where they are willing to commit the energy and resources to make the city's public housing decent. Lake Parc Place is a dramatic example of what is within reach: safe public housing that residents value. What lessons can Lake Parc Place offer housing policy makers and administrators about running successful public housing?

Management cannot do everything. Creating venues for residents to take part in creating and maintaining desirable living space dramatically increases the number of people working for good housing. Lake Parc Place's efforts in this regard have been remarkable: Management provided forums for residents to voice their concerns and a wide range of opportunities for them to get involved; many residents have taken advantage of these opportunities to improve their community. This situation in turn has helped residents become more involved in their community, making it a desirable place to live.

Lake Parc Place, of course, initially relied on a strong central authority to create order and on rules that restricted individual liberties. These are obviously not the only options for creating safe public housing, and critics might argue that residents should not have to choose between personal liberties and safety. Yet even if one agrees that it is unfair to expect residents to make such a trade-off, that trade-off remains one of the few options available. While critics of such restrictions call useful attention to the importance of not

ceding civil liberties for safety, calls to eliminate *any* restrictions on the freedoms of public housing residents are misguided for several reasons.

First, all people endure some restrictions, internally or externally imposed, to increase their level of safety. The residents of Lake Parc Place described the constraints imposed on them by the lack of safety in their former homes, and most Americans will concede that they limit their activities (such as not walking alone at night) to increase their safety level. We should be less concerned about whether restrictions are internally or externally imposed than about how onerous those restrictions are.

Second, externally imposed restrictions are not limited to public housing residents. Many residents of private apartments give up some freedoms for greater safety—check-in procedures for visitors or limited hours for laundry room access. Rules such as those at Lake Parc Place are not necessarily any more oppressive than those governing residents of private housing. In fact, many gated communities in suburbia maintain far stricter regulations on individuals—for example, rules governing what types of vehicles may be parked in driveways (Lang and Danielsen 1997). Policy makers should focus on what *types* of rules are legitimate, rather than whether *any* rules are legitimate.

Third, the residents of Lake Parc Place themselves agreed to the trade-off of some freedoms for greater safety. These residents made a full and clear accounting of what they had given up and what they had received in return; their informed decisions about their own well-being should be honored.

The success of Lake Parc Place in creating a safe and involved community offers one example of how to create secure public housing through the establishment and enforcement of rules governing the terms of residency. More important, it offers an encouraging response to those fearful that draconian rules used to create safety can only result in silenced and oppressed residents. Lake Parc Place was successful in improving residents' sense of safety with moderate rules and restrictions; rather than silencing residents, the rules helped create an environment safe enough for residents to express themselves and be involved in their community.

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